UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-SIXTH SESSION

Official Records

FIFTH COMMITTEE
20th meeting
held on
Friday, 1 November 1991
at 3 p.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 20th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. SPAANS (Netherlands)

later: Mr. MUNTASSER (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. MSELLE

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Distr. GENERAL
A/C.5/46/SR.20
8 November 1991

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

In the absence of the Chairman, Mr. Spaans (Netherlands), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.25 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 107: PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1992-1993 (continued) (A/46/6/Rev.1 and A/46/7)

AGENDA ITEM 108: PROGRAMME PLANNING (continued) (A/46/16 and Add.1)

First reading (continued)

Section 7. Elimination of apartheid

1. Mr. BAUDOT (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division) said that the Secretary-General's total estimates of $8,184,800 for section 7 were very modest in relation to the budget as a whole. The 1.2 per cent rate of real growth was slightly below average; no new posts were to be created and only two reclassifications of posts were proposed, one from P-4 to P-5 and the other from P-3 to P-4. Also, there were no non-recurrent expenditures and neither the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) nor the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC) had requested additional reports. Both of those Committees had, however, discussed to what extent proposed activities might have been overtaken by events, a question that reflected the difficulties of programming political sections of the budget relating to areas where fundamental changes were under way. If the pace of change accelerated in the region concerned, the Secretary-General would obviously make new proposals and, as the Advisory Committee had indicated in its report (A/46/7, para. 7.3), once the Special Committee against Apartheid had approved its programme of work for 1992, the work outlined in the submission would very probably be reoriented. The Fifth Committee would be able to review the programmatic and financial aspects of any further proposals in 1992.

2. The CHAIRMAN, speaking in his capacity as Vice-Chairman of the Committee for Programme and Coordination, drew attention to the conclusions and recommendations of CPC concerning section 7, as contained in paragraph 123 of its report (A/46/16).

3. Mr. KINCHEN (United Kingdom), referring to subprogramme 2 (Publicity against apartheid), observed that there was an inconsistency in the programme narrative concerning special events between the dates for certain promotional activities and the biennium covered by the proposed programme budget. Also, as the changes taking place in the region concerned were difficult to foresee and to budget for, his delegation would welcome clarification regarding the proposed timetable for the review of the programme of activity under section 7.

4. Mr. WORONIECKI (Poland) said that his delegation wondered whether the changing world was reflected at all in the proposed programme budget. In particular, despite the welcome positive trend towards the elimination of apartheid, resources under section 7 showed moderate growth, the number of posts remained unchanged and the requirements for the acquisition and replacement of office automation equipment seemed to indicate that there was an expectation that apartheid would continue to exist indefinitely. The estimates for section 7 represented two thirds of the stated requirement for section 5, concerning disarmament; moreover, the part of section 11 covering one of the five priority areas, namely the critical economic situation, recovery and development of Africa, would receive roughly five times less in terms of money and three times less in terms of posts.

5. In his delegation's view, the Committee should not limit itself to the examination of individual budget sections one after another but should also, and perhaps more importantly, compare the level of expenditures among various areas, where such comparisons made sense, in the light of recognized priorities and changing situations. The "business as usual" attitude to budgeting could only undermine the Organization's prestige at a time when so much hope was vested in it by the international community.

6. In addition to disarmament and the critical situation in Africa, another key area was East-West economic relations, since more and more of the centrally planned economies were becoming countries in transition and badly needed the assistance and advice of the United Nations system. Their relations with the developing countries and inherent problems and opportunities called for objective examination and constructive recommendations, without attempts to prejudge the matter in a one-sided manner, as was being done in another committee during the current session.

7. The idea of releasing staff and resources as a result of the completion, reduction, reorganization, merging, elimination, or otherwise of United Nations programmes, projects or activities, and providing Member States with the relevant information thereon, had been outlined in General Assembly resolution 3534 (XXX), which had been sponsored by his country. It was surely time to think of redeploying resources to areas where they were needed more, and to do so not in general terms but taking account of specific possibilities, for the benefit of all Member States and, in particular, the developing countries. As the resources to be allocated originated from State budgets, the Organization could not ignore public opinion and had a responsibility to try to catch up with the rapid changes taking place in the world in the last decade of the twentieth century.

8. Mr. ONWUALIA (Nigeria) said that any reductions in the appropriations under section 7, including those recommended by the Advisory Committee, could be detrimental to the activities of the Special Committee against Apartheid. The pace of change in South Africa was slow and the Fifth Committee should base its decisions not on anticipated developments but on the actual situation in that country.

9. Mr. ELDEEB (Egypt) said that his delegation wished to emphasize the importance of the role of the Special Committee against Apartheid and the need to abide by decisions already adopted by the General Assembly in connection with its activities. The Fifth Committee certainly could not base its decisions on changes that had not yet occurred, nor should it reduce appropriations when there was no information to suggest that alternative funding for programmes could be found. On the contrary, the Organization had to maintain its level of funding until the objective of the elimination of apartheid had been achieved. His delegation could not, therefore, agree to the reductions recommended by the Advisory Committee.

10. Mr. DANKWA (Ghana) said that the process of change in South Africa should not lead the United Nations to weaken its efforts to ensure the complete elimination of the infamous system of apartheid. He was surprised by the suggestion that other issues, such as the critical economic situation in Africa, could be compared with the dehumanization resulting from apartheid and that resources should be redeployed away from the task of restoring dignity to its victims.

11. With regard to funding for section 7, his delegation was concerned, in particular, that extrabudgetary resources were expected to remain unchanged from the 1990-1991 biennium. The Advisory Committee's recommended reduction mainly affected travel, which was essential for publicity against apartheid, that being a crucial activity in sensitizing people to the issues involved. The Secretariat had to be more imaginative and the resources requested were, if anything, too modest in view of the challenges still ahead.

12. Mr. ETUKET (Uganda) questioned the view that the activities outlined in section 7 could in any way be regarded as obsolete within the strict context of the regulations and rules applicable to the proposed programme budget. Publicity and promotional activities against apartheid were being programmed at a critical time in South Africa when there was a greater need than ever for the Special Committee to intensify its efforts to ensure an irreversible transition to a democratic, non-racial society in that country. His delegation doubted the appropriateness of the Advisory Committee's recommended reductions and felt that whatever changes might be required in programmes could be discussed in the framework of the revisions to the medium-term plan. For the time being, the Committee should base its decisions on approved and mandated activities and not try to anticipate future developments.

13. Mr. COHEN (United States of America), referring to paragraph 7.4 of the proposed programme budget, which mentioned the possibility of a re-evaluation of existing policies and programmes of action under section 7, asked what contingency plans the Secretariat was making for the eventuality of a breakthrough with regard to South Africa.

14. Mr. ZARI-ZARRE (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that he wished to underline the importance of the contribution being made by the Special Committee to the elimination of apartheid. That was one of the fundamental objectives of the United Nations and his delegation therefore supported the Secretary-General's total estimates for section 7.

15. Mr. BAUDOT (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division), replying to questions raised during the discussion, first of all thanked the United Kingdom representative for pointing out the mistake in the programme narrative for subprogramme 2, where the dates should be amended to reflect events that would be held during the 1992-1993 biennium. On general questions of procedure, the Special Committee against Apartheid would be meeting shortly to discuss its programme of work for 1992 and once a decision had been adopted in that regard by the General Assembly, the Fifth Committee would be able to consider it in the light of the Secretary-General's statement of programme budget implications. It should be recalled that the proposed programme budget had been drawn up in the spring for submission to CPC and that a number of changes had meanwhile been taking place in the context of the 1990-1991 programme budget. Programmatic changes would accelerate as warranted by developments in South Africa. There had, for example, already been a shift in the Committee's programme of work towards assistance to victims of apartheid and to disadvantaged sectors of society. Should apartheid come to an end, the Centre against Apartheid would disappear ipso facto and the Secretary-General would be pleased to submit revised estimates to the General Assembly suggesting different uses for the resources allocated.

16. Ms. BERENGUER (Chairman of the Committee for Programme Coordination) said that the comments of the representative of Poland about the failure of the programme to reflect the positive developments in South Africa were quite appropriate and had been widely debated in CPC. Nevertheless, CPC recommended approval by the General Assembly of the programme narrative of section 7.

17. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to approve the recommendation of CPC regarding section 7 contained in paragraph 123 of its report (A/46/16).

18. It was so decided.

19. The recommendation of the Advisory Committee for an appropriation in the amount of $8,156,800 under section 7 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993 was approved in first reading, on the understanding that the issues raised in connection with section 7 would be considered in informal consultations and any necessary adjustments made.

20. Mr. KINCHEN (United Kingdom), speaking in explanation of his position after the decision, said that his country shared the deep concern about the abhorrent system of apartheid. However, its long-standing position that the programme of action might be more productively oriented was reinforced by the ongoing changes in South Africa. Thus, he attached great importance to the statement by the Director of the Programme Planning and Budget Division that

(Mr. Kinchen, United Kingdom)

the work of the Special Committee against Apartheid would very probably be reoriented and was happy to proceed on a provisional basis under the current assumption that appropriations for the biennium 1992-1993 would be based on actual expenditures for the previous biennium.

Section 8. International Court of Justice

21. Mr. BAUDOT (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division) said that, as indicated in paragraph 8.6 of the proposed programme budget, programme budget proposals for the International Court of Justice were prepared by the Court in consultation with the Secretary-General and the Secretary-General traditionally submitted those proposals for approval by the General Assembly basically unaltered.

22. The Court and the Secretariat attached great importance to the funding of the Registry's request for $1,270,300 for temporary assistance for meetings. The 3.9 per cent growth rate was linked to the unprecedented case-load of the Court and to welcome developments in international relations. The request for $461,200 for external printing and binding was well justified. While the Chairman of CPC had stressed the desirability in general of implementing technical innovations and doing more work in-house, that option did not apply to the Court. Finally, the increase requested for travel expenses was negligible.

23. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), referring to the proposal for the establishment of a new post at the P-3 level for a systems coordinator for the Electronic Services Division of the Secretariat, said that it had not been possible to determine whether the functions would be of a permanent nature. Accordingly, ACABQ recommended instead the provision of a 12-month consultancy at the P-3 level. On the basis of the general recommendations made in chapter I of its report, ACABQ recommended reductions totalling $314,700. He wished to state clearly that those reductions should in no way adversely affect the emoluments and other conditions of service of the members of the Court.

24. Ms. BERENGUER (Chairman of the Committee for Programme Coordination) drew attention to the conclusions and recommendations of CPC concerning section 8, as contained in paragraphs 127 and 128 of its report (A/46/16).

25. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to approve the conclusions and recommendations of CPC regarding section 8 contained in paragraphs 127 and 128 of its report (A/46/16).

26. It was so decided.

27. The recommendation of the Advisory Committee for an appropriation in the amount of $16,510,900 under section 8 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993 was approved in first reading.

Section 9. Legal activities

28. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the rate of real growth for section 9 of the proposed programme budget had been calculated at minus 0.7 per cent after deletion of $1,965,000 for non-recurrent items. Although the details of its discussions were not reflected in its report, ACABQ had concluded that the real growth rate was considerably understated because the current methodology had not been followed. The total estimated requirement at 1991 prices was $21,291,200, including $19,326,200 for recurrent activities. ACABQ had been informed that the increase in recurrent expenditures was $332,800. He believed that the real growth rate would range between 1 per cent and 2 per cent. That discrepancy illustrated the problem of the current budget methodology and the urgent need to proceed with the discussion of budget methodology proposed for early 1992.

29. The Advisory Committee recommended acceptance of all the proposals under section 9 except for the reclassification from P-4 to P-5 of one post of Legal Officer in the Codification Division. In that connection, he noted that the Advisory Committee recommended acceptance of all but 11 of the proposed reclassifications for 1992-1993 (A/46/7, para. 47). In deciding whether to accept its recommendations in that regard, it was important for the Fifth Committee to keep the issue of fairness uppermost in mind and not to let an energetic Secretariat campaign sway it to accept some reclassifications while rejecting others simply because there had been no campaign for them.

30. In accordance with the general proposals in chapter I of its report, ACABQ recommended an additional reduction of $614,700, including $548,500 for printing. As the printing account was centrally managed, he saw no reason why such a reduction could not be accommodated.

31. Mr. BERENGUER (Chairman of the Committee for Programme Coordination) said that section 9 had been widely discussed in CPC, as indicated in paragraphs 130 to 135 of its report, with respect to the reclassification, CPC shared the opinion of ACABQ that further details were needed to determine whether the workload justified the change. In paragraph 136 of its report, CPC recommended approval by the General Assembly of the programme narrative of section 9.

32. Mr. SENA CARDOSA (Brazil) said that his country would support any cost-saving measures compatible with the implementation of mandated programmes. However, in a number of resolutions, including resolutions 42/156, 43/169 and 45/41, the General Assembly had pointed to the increased importance of the role of the Codification Division, and had also stressed the importance of the work of the Division in preparing summaries, updating the survey of international law and servicing the International Law Commission. Its workload had increased as a result of both the declaration of the United Nations Decade of International Law and requests accepted by the International Law Commission. Brazil therefore believed that the proposal to reclassify the post of Legal Officer in the Codification Division was fully justified.

33. Mr. COHEN (United States of America) said that, in reading the report of ACABQ, he had been concerned to note repeated instances in which the Secretariat had classified ongoing activities as non-recurrent. That practice distorted the measure of real growth. The volume of such so-called "non-recurrent" expenditures noted by ACABQ in section 9 was small. He would, however, like to know whether the Advisory Committee had found other examples of similar improper classifications of expenditure that were not mentioned in its report.

34. His delegation had been particularly troubled by the Secretary-General's proposal that the period for the elimination of the backlog in the Treaty Series should be extended by another five years. It believed that economies could be achieved by contracting with outside specialists, as had been done in the case of the United Nations Yearbook, and it proposed that the General Assembly should request the Secretary-General to explore a similar arrangement for bringing the Treaty Series up to date.

35. His delegation supported the recommendation of the Advisory Committee that the United Nations should seek the financial support of end-users of the Yearbook of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL) and urged the Assembly to endorse that recommendation and to request the Secretary-General to provide the Fifth Committee with a plan for its implementation at the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly. With respect to the programme for the computerization of the General Legal Division, he noted the view expressed by ACABQ that the number of personal computers proposed was excessive in comparison with the staffing level. His delegation would appreciate an explanation from the Secretariat regarding the general policies and guidelines applied in determining the number of work stations allocated. His delegation was not confident that the computerization programme as currently envisaged would result in either savings or greater efficiency and believed that an in-depth review should be undertaken.

36. Ms. ROTHEISER (Austria) said that, despite the increased workload under legal activities, the budget estimates for the section appeared to result in a negative growth rate of 0.7 per cent. Her delegation therefore opposed any cut in the proposed appropriations under section 9.

37. Referring to the estimated percentage distribution of resources among subprogrammes, she noted that the priority designations were not reflected in the resource allocations. With respect to the redeployments proposed in paragraph 9.20 of the proposed programme budget, her delegation regretted that such redeployments had been achieved only within the same expenditure section and not on an intersectoral level. As for the proposal to redeploy resources for long-distance telephone calls and facsimile transmission from the Office of the Legal Counsel to the United Nations Administrative Tribunal, her delegation found it rather coincidental that the exact amount required by the Tribunal happened not to be needed by the Office of the Legal Counsel.

(Ms. Rotheiser, Austria)

38. The Secretary-General was to be commended for the downward reclassification proposed in the Codification Division - the only downward reclassification in the entire proposed programme budget. However, her delegation did not understand by ACABQ had accepted the argument of a redistribution of responsibilities in the case of the downward reclassification and rejected it in the case of the upward reclassification requested for the same Division. It strongly supported the Secretary-General's proposal that the post in question should be upgraded from the P-4 to the P-5 level.

39. As it had stated before, her delegation opposed the Organization's increased reliance on extrabudgetary resources, which hindered its ability to control resource flows, implement its mandates and maintain the order of priorities established by the General Assembly. It therefore could not support the ACABQ recommendation that relevant non-governmental subscribers should be asked to support the work of UNCITRAL (A/46/7, para. 9.6). It also could not support the Advisory Committee's recommendation that the travel budget of UNCITRAL should be cut simply because requested appropriations for travel costs had decreased under other expenditure sections. Given past experience, it could see no reason for reducing that estimate, which, when adjusted for inflation, reflected a zero rate of real growth.

40. Mr. CONMY (Ireland) said that his delegation attached importance to the international legal activities of the Organization. It also appreciated the frank views of the Chairmen of ACABQ and CPC and the Director of the Programme Planning and Budget Division on the problem of reclassification. However, with regard to the proposed reclassifications in the Codification Division (A/46/6/Rev.1, para. 9.54), which his delegation found admirable and supported, he regretted that ACABQ had not appreciated the Secretary-General's proposal for the reclassification of one post of Legal Officer from P-4 to P-5.

41. Mr. DROUSHIOTIS (Cyprus) said that his country also attached importance to the work of the International Law Commission and to the United Nations Decade of International Law, which had been proposed by a meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of non-aligned countries in Cyprus in 1988. His delegation therefore supported the Secretariat's efforts to enhance the importance of the International Law Commission and supported its proposals for the reclassifications in the Codification Division.

42. Mr. MOSCHOPOULOS (Greece) said that his delegation rarely disagreed with ACABQ, which gave the Committee invaluable service, but thought that both the proposed reclassifications in the Codification Division were justified, in particular the reclassification from P-4 to P-5.

43. Mr. BELHAJ (Tunisia) said that his delegation, too, supported the work of the Office of Legal Affairs and was satisfied with the work of the Codification Division. Although it did not see the proposed reclassifications in that Division as raising a matter of principle, it would appreciate more

(Mr. Belhaj, Tunisia)

information about the additional work and responsibilities that were deemed to justify the upgrading from P-4 to P-5, to ensure that the proposal was not just a matter of career development.

44. Mr. OSELLA (Argentina) said that his delegation supported the upgradings proposed in the Codification Division, which were justified by the greater responsibility involved in performing more work with less supervision.

45. Mr. KARBUCZKY (Hungary) said that his delegation also supported the proposed reclassifications and looked forward to the results of the ad hoc seminar on career development in 1992.

46. Mr. BARIMANI (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that his delegation agreed with those who supported the proposed reclassification of a post in the Codification Division from the P-4 to the P-5 level, in the absence of any justification for the recommendation by ACABQ against it.

47. Mr. COHEN (United States of America) said that he wished to record his delegation's support for the recommendation of ACABQ against the upgrading from P-4 to P-5 in the Codification Division.

48. Mr. INOMATA (Japan) said that he could not understand the apparent competition that was developing between delegations to voice support either for the Secretariat or for ACABQ over the proposed reclassifications in the Codification Division and expressed concern at the way in which the discussion was being conducted.

49. Mr. BELHAJ (Tunisia) said that it was not possible to discuss the change in workload that was said to justify the proposed upgrading without the presence of representatives from the Secretariat department concerned. His delegation had asked for the whole problem of reclassification to be examined in informal discussions where representatives of departments could be present.

50. Mr. BIDNY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) agreed with the representative of Japan that the discussion had taken an unusual turn. As a member of ACABQ, like Japan, his delegation also had views on the arguments in favour of the recommendation in the Advisory Committee's report (A/46/7, para. 9.10). The current discussion was, however, not about substance and, if it was to continue, it would be necessary to resort to the unusual procedure of asking a representative of the Secretariat to explain the arguments in favour of the upgrading so as to give a clear idea of the issues involved.

51. Mr. KINCHEN (United Kingdom) said that the Secretariat had always spoken with one voice and had been represented by the Programme Planning and Budget Division in the Fifth Committee. His delegation considered it important to maintain that practice.

52. The CHAIRMAN said that the course of the discussion was not a matter for concern because all those involved had kept to relevant issues. The Committee's needs would be served if the Chairman of ACABQ and the Director of the Programme Planning and Budget Division responded to the discussion in the usual way.

53. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that he had not found the debate on the proposed reclassifications in the Codification Division surprising, because the Committee sometimes did reject proposals that had been made by ACABQ on purely technical grounds. However, the Committee was not yet taking a decision on the recommendations which would be the subject of further consideration at informal discussions, together with other proposals for reclassifications on which delegations had commented.

54. In reply to the comments by the representative of Austria, he said that, as he had mentioned in his introductory statement, the bulk of the general reduction recommended by ACABQ related to printing. The Advisory Committee's investigation had revealed that the printing account had realized large balances over the years, as a result of the introduction of new technology and the enhancement of the Organization's internal printing capacity. However, as the Director of the Programme Planning and Budget Division had indicated, because there was one single printing account which was managed centrally, the reductions attributed to printing under individual budget sections, such as those shown under section 9, could be transferred to those sections with larger savings.

55. Ms. BERENGUER (Chairman of the Committee for Programme and Coordination) said that CPC hoped to be able to work on the new procedures for evaluating workloads when they were presented by the Secretary-General. It therefore hoped that at its current session, the General Assembly would designate competent bodies to look into the matter in time to avoid a similar sort of debate at the forty-seventh session. For the time being, the Committee's recommendations on the matter were as set forth in paragraph 44 of its report (A/46/16).

56. Mr. BAUDOT (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division) said that information had been available on the backlog in the printing of the United Nations Treaty Series, a question which had been raised by the representative of the United States of America, but he would try to provide more information during informal discussions. Considerable progress had been made and the development of a more serious backlog was not due to lack of efficiency but to the difficulty of finding enough competent personnel. It was generally agreed that publication of the Treaty Series should have priority and more money would be made available for that purpose if it was necessary. Much had been said about the large reduction proposed in printing costs, but that was due to the volume of resources allocated to printing. The matter could be clarified in informal discussions.

(Mr. Baudot)

57. With regard to the comment made by the representative of Austria about the apparent redeployment of resources from subprogramme 1 to subprogramme 3, he said that it was simply a matter of presentation. On the question of the proposed reclassifications in the Codification Division, he, too, considered the discussion quite normal. There would doubtless be an opportunity to discuss the proposals formally or informally, but the ad hoc seminar proposed by CPC and referred to by the representative of Hungary was not, so far as he knew, to be concerned with the very important question of reclassification.

58. Mr. BENNETT (United States of America) said that, as the backlog in the publication of the United Nations Treaty Series had been 260 volumes in 1980 and was currently 305 volumes, there had evidently been some slippage. He therefore asked the Secretariat to confirm that it would provide a detailed picture of developments over the past decade.

59. Mr. BAUDOT (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division) said that the Secretariat would do its best to provide the information requested.

60. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to approve the recommendation of CPC regarding section 9 contained in paragraph 136 of its report (A/46/16).

61. It was so decided.

62. The recommendation of the Advisory Committee for an appropriation in the amount of $22,058,600 under section 9 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993 was approved in first reading.

63. Mr. Muntasser (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) took the Chair.

Section 10. Law of the Sea and Ocean Affairs

64. Mr. MICHALSKI (United States of America) said that his delegation would welcome clarification of the budgetary provisions for the servicing of the Preparatory Commission for the International Sea-Bed Authority and for the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea. The Advisory Committee had noted that some elements of the budget estimates reflected certain assumptions regarding the status of the Convention on the Law of the Sea, and he asked what specific changes had been included in the proposed programme budget with respect to such developments. He would also welcome an indication that all regular budget funding of activities would be terminated once the Convention entered into force. Lastly, he noted his Government's reservation regarding funding for the Preparatory Commission under the regular budget.

65. Mr. KOCATURK (Turkey) said that expenditures arising under the Convention on the Law of the Sea should not be met from the regular budget, but by the signatories to the Convention. On the understanding that his Government reserved the right not to contribute to such expenditures, his delegation would join the consensus and not request a vote on section 10.

66. Mr. BELHAJ (Tunisia) said that the Secretary-General was being somewhat optimistic concerning the possible date of entry into force of the Convention and the establishment of the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf. He would welcome additional information. He noted the comment by CPC (A/46/16, para. 140) that consultants for specialized studies should be selected on a wide geographical basis. The question of the proposed reclassification of one P-4 post to the P-5 level (A/46/6/Rev.1, para 10.22) could be dealt with in the informal consultations to be held on reclassification.

67. Mr. RAE (India) said that his delegation supported the proposed reclassification of the P-4 post and the use of consultants under section 10.

68. Mr. SIKKANDER (Sri Lanka) said that the Secretary-General should be provided with the necessary resources to implement activities falling under section 10, such activities being designed essentially to help developing countries.

69. Mr. MERIFIELD (Canada) agreed that the activities proposed under section 10 were important and that the estimates were reasonable. The Committee should exercise prudence in considering any cuts.

70. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the Advisory Committee had noted the Secretary-General's comment that the servicing of the Preparatory Commission was expected to be completed within the biennium or shortly thereafter (A/46/6/Rev.1, para. 10.5). Given the uncertainty regarding the exact date of entry into force of the Convention, it had been assumed that servicing would continue throughout the biennium. Should that not be necessary, the Advisory Committee would review the matter, as noted in paragraph 10.3 of its report (A/46/7).

71. Mr. BAUDOT (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division) endorsed the comments of the Chairman of the Advisory Committee concerning the servicing of the Preparatory Commission.

72. Mr. MICHALSKI (United States of America) asked whether the proposed estimates reflected the decision of the Preparatory Commission to shorten its 1992 session by one week. He also asked whether all regular budget funding for the Preparatory Commission would end once the Convention entered into force.

73. Mr. BAUDOT (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division) said that the budget estimates had been prepared before the Preparatory Commission had taken the decision to shorten its session. Should that decision be maintained there would be an element of over-budgeting.

74. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to approve the recommendation of CPC regarding section 10 contained in paragraph 145 of its report (A/46/16).

75. It was so decided.

76. The recommendations of the Advisory Committee for an appropriation in the amount of $9,351,900 under section 10 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993 was approved in first reading, on the understanding that the issues raised in connection with section 10 would be considered in informal consultations and any necessary adjustments made.

The meeting rose at 5.50 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-SIXTH SESSION

Official Records

FIFTH COMMITTEE
21st meeting
held on
Monday, 4 November 1991
at 3 p.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 21st MEETING

Chairman: Mr. MUNTASSER (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

later: Mrs. GOICOCHEA (Cuba)

Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. MSELLE

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AGENDA ITEM 107: PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1992-1993 (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 108: PROGRAMME PLANNING (continued)

First reading (continued)

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Section 11B. World Food Council

Section 11C. United Nations Conference on Environment and Development

Section 11D. Regional Commissions New York Office

Section 12. Regular programme of technical cooperation

Section 13. Department of International Economic and Social Affairs

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The meeting was called to order at 3.25 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 107: PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1992-1993 (continued) (A/46/6/Rev.1, A/46/7)

AGENDA ITEM 108: PROGRAMME PLANNING (continued) (A/46/16 and Add.1, A/46/173, A/46/330)

First reading (continued)

1. Mrs. VAN ANTWERPEN (Namibia), commenting on sections 6 and 7 of the proposed programme budget, said that her delegation took note of paragraph 6.5 of the first report on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993 (A/46/7) by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) and in particular the fact that, according to the representatives of the Secretary-General, the voluntary contributions for the scholarship programme for Namibian students would be sufficient to cover the activities of the programme until its completion, and that a need to resort to the regular budget for additional funds was not anticipated. However, if that projection proved inaccurate, assurances should be given that any shortfall would be offset from the regular budget, and a provision to that effect should be incorporated in the Committee's resolution on the proposed programme budget in accordance with General Assembly resolution 45/248 B.

2. Her country attached great importance to the scholarship programme and to the Nationhood Programme for Namibia. Implementation of the programmes was to continue in 1991 and beyond, and the next United Nations budget should make provision for the resources needed to ensure their success. The development of human resources was of great significance in the case of Namibia owing to its severe social and economic disparities, including a very high level of illiteracy. The continuation of the education and training programmes sponsored by the United Nations would make a considerable contribution to the amelioration of the situation.

3. Her delegation had joined in the consensus decision by which the Committee had approved section 7 of the proposed programme budget, on the understanding that the Committee would consider in informal consultations the issues raised with respect to the section. Nevertheless, it did not understand why the Advisory Committee recommended reductions in certain programmes of the Special Committee against Apartheid. The recent events in South Africa underlined the need for the Special Committee to continue to monitor the situation closely, and it must therefore have all the resources needed for carrying out its work until apartheid was totally eradicated.

Section 11A. Office of the Director-General for Development and International Economic Cooperation

4. Mr. BAUDOT (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division) said that the resources required under section 11A related to the Office of the Director-General for Development and International Economic Cooperation itself and to the implementation of the programme "Africa: critical economic situation, recovery and development". The growth rate of about 5 per cent in the appropriation for the Office of the Director-General was due to the creation of a new P-4 post and two post reclassifications. The programme for Africa would be implemented by the Economic Commission for Africa and the Department of Public Information and coordinated by the Office of the Director-General. Paragraph 11A.38 of the proposed programme budget gave a summary of the corresponding requirements. The Secretariat was making arrangements to ensure that the responsibility for coordination of the programme was clearly centralized in the Office of the Director-General, in accordance with the recommendation made by the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC) in its report on the work of its thirty-first session (A/46/16). Those arrangements would come into effect once the proposed programme budget had been approved.

5. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the report of the Advisory Committee on section 11A (A/46/7), said that the Committee had recommended approval of the eight new posts proposed for the programme "Africa: critical economic situation, recovery and development", and the reclassification of one General Service post to the Principal level and the establishment of one P-4 post. However, it could not agree to the reclassification of one D-1 post to the D-2 level. The Advisory Committee was not recommending any changes in the resources requested for travel of staff, but it trusted that such resources would be used with maximum efficiency. The general recommendations of the Advisory Committee in chapter I of its report, as applied to section 11A, resulted in reductions totalling $64,000.

6. Ms. BERENGUER (Chairman of the Committee for Programme and Coordination), introducing the CPC report on section 11A, said that it had not been satisfied with the programme narrative of the programme "Africa: critical economic situation, recovery and development", which appeared in paragraphs 11A.26 to 11A.29 of the proposed programme budget, and substantial changes were recommended in paragraphs 160 to 186 of the report. CPC had recommended that a separate and identifiable unit should be established within the Office of the Director-General to undertake the relevant coordination activities and that adequate resources should be provided for the economic recovery and development of Africa, commensurate with the high priority accorded to it by the General Assembly.

7. CPC had also recommended that the various activities of the programme for Africa should be implemented on the basis of an innovative approach and in a balanced and coordinated manner, taking into account the responsibility of

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both the international community and the African countries. The activities might be amended when the medium-term plan was revised in the light of the decisions which the General Assembly might take at its forty-sixth session after final evaluation of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development.

8. CPC had recommended that the General Assembly should approve the programme narrative of section 11A subject to the CPC recommendations and to decisions of the Economic and Social Council, on the understanding that the resources requested from the regular budget would be adequate. The Economic and Social Council had approved the CPC report and thus its recommendations on section 11A.

9. Mr. STEEGHS (Netherlands), speaking on behalf of the Twelve States members of the European Community, stressed the importance of the activities under section 11A and endorsed the proposals of the Secretary-General with the amendments recommended by the Advisory Committee.

10. Mr. EL DEEB (Egypt) emphasized the need to keep in mind the critical situation of Africa, which was accorded a leading place among the priorities of the international community. The necessary resources must be found to achieve the goals of African economic recovery set in the medium-term plan and to reorient programmes in order to speed up the continent's economic development. It should be pointed out in that connection that the Office of the Director-General for Development and International Economic Cooperation seemed to have received more resources than the Economic Commission for Africa.

11. His delegation attached great importance to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, which had a direct link with the situation in Africa.

12. His delegation was concerned about the critical situation of translation and interpretation services in the Economic Commission for Africa. In its resolution 45/248 B the General Assembly had requested that action should be taken for the revival of a training programme for translators/précis-writers for the Commission. The report of the Secretary-General (A/C.5/46/19) indicated that no action had been taken in that regard and drew attention to obstacles to the implementation of the resolution, particularly the high vacancy rate. His delegation supported the proposal that the vacancies should be filled and a permanent team of interpreters established, while at the same time maintaining the present system of short-term interpreters. The Commission's other conference services and its technological capacity should also be strengthened in order to improve the programming of meetings and preparation of documents. Since the Commission must have the necessary financial resources, the appropriations proposed by the Secretary-General should be approved.

13. Mr. BENNETT (United States of America) recalled that in the past his delegation had encouraged the United Nations to strengthen coordination among programmes; however, he believed that in some respects that effort had gone too far, with limited results: there were still too many inter-agency task forces that required excessive travel and staff time. Precise information should be provided on how many inter-secretariat and inter-agency coordination mechanisms currently existed in order to update the document submitted to the Committee for Programme and Coordination some years earlier.

14. Section 11A of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993 requested the addition of one new post and the reclassification of one D-1 post to the D-2 level to improve coordination machinery. His delegation opposed the establishment of the new post requested by the Secretary-General and requested the Secretariat to explain the specific activities those posts would be engaged in to improve coordination within the United Nations system, and what advantages Member States would gain from the new post. Similarly, the Secretariat should provide specific details to justify the request for $131,200 in paragraph 11A.17 to provide "expert advice and specialized assistance" to the Director-General and should indicate the purposes for which such assistance had been provided during the current biennium.

15. Furthermore, it was estimated that the Office of the Director-General for Development and International Economic Cooperation would spend $427,000 in current dollars on staff travel. Given the top-heavy structure of that Office, such high expenditures on travel were to be expected. However, much of the coordination work, which appeared to be the justification for the large travel budget, could be accomplished without the large number of meetings anticipated.

16. Section 11A of the budget also included funding needed to finance a new programme entitled "Africa: critical economic situation, recovery and development". CPC, dissatisfied with the programme proposal of the Secretary-General, had recommended far-reaching changes in its structure. While it had doubts about the usefulness of some of the proposed activities, his delegation supported the recommendation of CPC on the understanding that the programme would be implemented during the 1992-1993 biennium within the $1.3 million allocated for that section of the budget. Those assurances had been given by the Secretariat before CPC had decided to expand the programme and the General Assembly should be given similar assurances at the current stage.

17. The genesis of the new programme narrative had been very controversial and several delegations, including his own, had been troubled by the procedures which had been followed by CPC. At the same time, it was necessary to recognize the importance of the action taken in that case by CPC, which had decided that the programmes proposed by the Secretary-General were an inadequate response to the needs of Africa and had decided to formulate a new programme. CPC should examine all programmes as critically; CPC should be a forum in which delegations actively engaged in the programme formulation process, and should not merely rubber stamp proposals from the Secretariat which were clearly inadequate.

18. Mr. WU Gang (China) approved the resources requested by the Secretary-General for the Office of the Director-General for Development and International Economic Cooperation because the Office discharged very important functions for the coordination of the activities of the entire United Nations system. The programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993 assigned new functions to that Office, mainly for programme 45 of the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997 (Africa: critical economic situation, recovery and development). It was essential to ensure that the Office would have the necessary resources to carry out those new functions.

19. The Advisory Committee had recommended against approval of the Secretary-General's proposal in paragraph 11A.16 of the proposed programme budget (reclassification of one D-1 post to the D-2 level). Nevertheless, his delegation considered that proposal fully justified in view of the importance of the coordination activities of the Office of the Director-General for Development and International Economic Cooperation and the new coordination functions which had been entrusted to it.

20. Mr. IRUMBA (Uganda) agreed with the preceding speakers that section 11A of the proposed programme budget was of major importance: the Office of the Director-General for Development and International Economic Cooperation played a decisive role in coordinating the activities of the United Nations system and its work was indispensable to the cohesion of the programmes of the Organization. His delegation therefore endorsed the reclassification proposed by the Secretary-General in paragraph 11A.16 (reclassification of one D-1 post to the D-2 level) because it reflected the importance of coordination activities, which must be carried out at the highest level to ensure the desired results.

21. The Committee for Programme and Coordination had substantially improved the narrative for the programme "Africa: critical economic situation, recovery and development", for it had specified the activities to which resources should be allocated and had clarified its objectives. He took note of the recommendation of the Committee in paragraph 159 of its report, and, in particular, of the need to ensure that the activities included in section 11A of the proposed programme budget would be carried out within the resources requested by the Secretary-General. However, the funds allocated to some of the activities in the section were too low and must be revised if the stated objectives were to be achieved.

22. The implementation of many of the subprogrammes included in section 11A, in particular, activities relating to African economic recovery and development, depended on the availability of extrabudgetary funding. In that connection, the Secretariat should provide precise information on the resources which were currently available and on expected future resources and should indicate whether there was an assurance that the necessary funds would be available during the biennium 1992-1993.

23. Mrs. GOICOCHEA (Cuba) underscored the importance of section 11A, which was closely related to general aspects of development; while she endorsed the Secretary-General's proposals, including the proposal to reclassify one D-1 post to the D-2 level, she shared the concern expressed by the Ugandan and Egyptian representatives that the resources allocated, particularly for activities relating to African economic recovery, might prove inadequate. She also endorsed the recommendations of CPC in paragraphs 155 to 159 of its report.

24. With reference to the programme narrative of section 11A, she wondered why sections 11A.2 and 11A.3, which mentioned activities falling within the competence of the Office of the Director-General for Development and International Economic Cooperation, made no reference to other activities which derived from legislative mandates, in particular those relating to science and technology, the environment and new and renewable sources of energy. It would be appropriate if the Secretary-General could explain why no reference had been made either to those activities or to activities pursuant to resolution 44/215 relating to coercive economic measures, which, in the annex to resolution 45/253, were included among the mandates for subprogramme 1.

25. Section 11A.5 mentioned activities connected with entrepreneurship, which were not included in the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997. She suggested that the Secretary-General should indicate the legislative basis for their inclusion.

26. Mr. ZAHID (Morocco) said that the importance which his delegation attached to section 11A of the budget was prompted primarily by the inclusion in it of activities related to the critical economic situation in Africa. In the consideration of that section, it should be borne in mind that improving the economic and social situation of that continent, one of the poorest regions of the modern world, had been an absolute priority for the international community for some time. Efforts directed towards the recovery and development of Africa, however, had not been commensurate with requirements, as was apparent from the reports of the United Nations. The situation continued to worsen and the support of the international community was increasingly necessary. For that reason, and to prevent the further and irremediable deterioration of the situation in Africa, more resources should be allocated to that section of the budget.

27. He therefore welcomed the recommendations of the Committee for Programme and Coordination in paragraphs 155 and 156 of its report regarding the establishment of a separate and identifiable unit within the Office of the Director-General to undertake those activities that fell within its responsibility as proposed under programme 45 of the medium-term plan (Africa: critical economic situation, recovery and development), and the provision of adequate resources for the economic recovery and development of Africa, commensurate with the high priority accorded to it by the General Assembly. The modifications to the programme narrative of section 11A proposed by the Committee for Programme and Coordination were entirely justified.

28. Mr. ONWUALIA (Nigeria) supported the Secretary-General's proposal for the reclassification of one D-1 post to the D-2 level, since he considered that the activities included in section 11A of the proposed programme budget were of vital importance and that coordination functions were essential if those activities were to be carried out properly.

29. The modifications proposed by the Committee for Programme and Coordination to the programme narrative of section 11A of the proposed programme budget were very positive, in particular with regard to activities related to the critical economic situation in Africa. The recommendation of CPC in paragraph 159 of its report was entirely justified; however, in view of the modifications proposed to the programme narrative, he suggested that the representative of the Secretary-General should guarantee that the resources allocated in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993 were sufficient for its execution.

30. Mr. BAUDOT (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division), replying to the questions raised by representatives, said that the Secretariat had attempted, in the proposed programme budget, to allocate resources in accordance with the objectives which had been set and with the mandates assigned to it. In view of the substantial modifications to the programme narrative proposed by the Committee for Programme and Coordination, which primarily affected coordination activities in the broad sense, it was legitimate to ask whether the Secretary-General's estimates were still sufficient for the attainment of the stated objectives. Everything seemed to indicate that they were; on the other hand, that section, like all other sections, was subject to possible changes in accordance with resolution 41/213: if a new legislative mandate was proposed, the Secretary-General would explain its consequences for the programme budget and would present revised estimates. Since there was no new legislative mandate, no steps were being taken as yet to modify the estimates in the proposed programme budget.

31. With reference to the Office of the Director-General for Development and International Economic Cooperation, it was even more difficult to determine whether the resources allocated to it would be sufficient for it to fulfil its mandate under resolution 32/197. The fact that section 11A of the budget had been presented in the form of a programme could give the impression that it was possible to establish a clear and unequivocal relationship between the resources allocated and each of the proposed activities. That impression was false: the specific features of the Office's functions were such as to prevent a clear distinction being drawn between the needs expressly connected with coordination activities and those connected with other substantive aspects of its work; it was also evident that the activities assigned to the P-4 level post, whose establishment had been proposed in paragraph 11A.15 of the proposed programme budget, would not be limited to coordination.

32. With reference to the question raised by Uganda concerning extrabudgetary resources available to finance activities under section 11A of the proposed progamme budget, he said that at present there was no specific trust fund for activities connected with the economic recovery of Africa.

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33. With regard to the questions raised by the Cuban delegation relating to entrepreneurship and coercive economic measures, he regretted that he was not in a position to reply at that stage but he gave assurances that he would do so as soon as possible.

34. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to approve the conclusions and recommendations of CPC on section 11A, as contained in paragraphs 155 to 186 of its report (A/46/16).

35. It was so decided.

36. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to approve in first reading the recommendation of the Advisory Committee for an appropriation in the amount of $6,797,400 under section 11A of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993, on the understanding that the issues raised in connection with section 11A would be considered in informal consultations and any necessary adjustments made.

37. It was so decided.

Section 11B. World Food Council

38. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman, Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the report of the Advisory Committee on section 11B, said that table 11B.3 showed two reductions in resources for temporary assistance for meetings, amounting to $117,800 and $78,600, respectively. In accordance with current methodology, the second figure actually represented a recalculation of the requirements for the same services and, consequently, should have featured in the recalculation of the base. That was also true for paragraph 11 B.9, which provided for a decrease of $7,400 based on past experience. His remarks were not intended as a criticism, but rather to illustrate how an incorrect entry could affect the rate of resource growth.

39. The Secretary-General had estimated the requirements under temporary assistance for meetings at $766,600 at revised 1991 rates (A/46/7, para. 11B.3). The Committee had noted that for 10 years the resources for temporary assistance for meetings had been far in excess of actual requirements.

40. The Advisory Committee also questioned the estimate for consultants, which it considered higher than normal, and believed that the need for consultants would be reduced if the specialized capabilities of the staff were utilized.

41. The Advisory Committee did not endorse the separate provision for public information activities. Ten years earlier, the Committee had made a similar recommendation concerning the programme budget for 1980-1981, which the Fifth Committee had accepted. The Advisory Committee therefore believed that the public information-related services should be provided by the Department of Public Information, as had thus far been the case.

(Mr. Mselle)

42. The Advisory Committee also considered that the estimate for rental and maintenance of premises should be lower than the figure proposed in the budget, for the reasons set out in paragraph 11B.7 of its report (A/46/7). However, the Committee was not recommending any reduction in that item.

43. With regard to official travel, the Committee questioned the increase envisaged for that item, as noted in paragraph 11B.8 of its report.

44. In summary, the Advisory Committee recommended a reduction totalling $123,800 for the reasons outlined in paragraphs 11B.4, 11B.6 and 11B.8 of its report, in addition to the recommendations in chapter I, which would result in an additional reduction of $147,000.

45. Ms. BERENGUER (Chairman of the Committee for Programme and Coordination) said that CPC believed that the World Food Council (WFC) should review its activities, so that they would be more closely geared to achieving the objectives of eradicating hunger and malnutrition (A/46/16, para. 190). CPC also recommended certain changes in the priorities proposed for those activities, namely, the deletion of the low priority designation given to the impact of economic adjustment on food security and to emerging food security issues, and the assignment of low priority to all information activities under subparagraphs 3 (a) and (b) - information kits and press releases (A/46/16, para. 191). CPC nevertheless recommended the adoption of section 11B.

46. Mr. BENNETT (United States of America) said that his delegation strongly supported the recommendations of CPC and the Advisory Committee regarding the programme and budget of WFC. It proposed that the Fifth Committee should request the Secretary-General to take immediate action to implement the recommendation contained in paragraph 11B.7 of the report of the Advisory Committee concerning the Council's office premises. If necessary, WFC should vacate the premises it rented from FAO.

47. His delegation believed that it was time for the General Assembly to consider the Council's future. There were currently at least three major United Nations agencies which dealt with questions relating to food and agriculture, and their combined expenditures amounted to hundreds of millions of dollars a year. In view of the size of those programmes, he wondered whether WFC made a significant contribution. It would seem that certain WFC activities duplicated the work of FAO, IFAD and WFP. If the concept of rationalization was applied, WFC activities might be absorbed by the other institutions. In his delegation's view, the Assembly should consider that possibility.

48. Ms. ROTHEISER (Austria) expressed surprise that, despite the Italian Government's generosity in providing premises free of charge to FAO, the latter was collecting rent at commercial rates for the portion of its space which WFC occupied. Her delegation would appreciate an explanation of the situation from FAO. It also fully supported the Advisory Committee's

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recommendation that every effort should be made to obtain rent-free premises for the secretariat of WFC.

49. Her delegation shared the Advisory Committee's concern that there was no specific legislative mandate for the convening of two ad hoc expert groups on food security. It also believed that substantial savings could be realized in that area.

50. In paragraph 11B.4 of its report, the Advisory Committee indicated that savings could be realized if the workload standards for conference-servicing staff and translation and typing standards were raised. It also believed that the regular provision of a contingency of over 30 per cent for temporary assistance was not justified. Her delegation agreed with the Advisory Committee's proposals in that regard.

51. Mrs. GOICOCHEA (Cuba) reiterated her delegation's support for the activities of WFC, as much remained to be done in order to attain certain objectives proposed at the World Food Conference, especially with regard to the need to eradicate hunger and malnutrition. Her delegation was not, however, opposed in principle to the recommendations of the Advisory Committee, provided that the resources ultimately approved were sufficient for the Council to carry out its duties.

52. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to approve the conclusions and recommendations of CPC on section 11B, as contained in paragraphs 190 to 192 of its report (A/46/16).

53. It was so decided.

54. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to approve in first reading the recommendation of the Advisory Committee for an appropriation in the amount of $7,011,900, under section 11B of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993, on the understanding that the issues raised in connection with section 11B would be considered in informal consultations and any necessary adjustments made.

55. It was so decided.

Section 11C. United Nations Conference on Environment and Development

56. Ms. BERENGUER (Chairman of the Committee for Programme and Coordination) said that that section 11C of the budget referred to two of the priorities established in the medium-term plan. Accordingly, CPC had examined it carefully and recommended that paragraph 11 C.2 should be changed to include a reference to General Assembly resolution 44/228, which described in detail what was expected of the Conference. CPC also recommended that the last sentence of paragraph 11C.2 should be deleted. It was not the intention of CPC to become mired in details and questions of editing, but since resolution

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44/228 had been carefully negotiated and was balanced, it made no sense to add anything to the mandate already established in that resolution.

57. Since the Conference would be held in early June 1992, the final preparatory meeting was expected to take place in March 1992. A number of questions had been raised in CPC concerning the period during which resources would be needed, since the preparatory work was to be completed in a few months. The Secretariat, however, had assured CPC that the resources were really necessary and that they were also needed for the follow-up to the conference. CPC recommended that appropriate revisions should be made to the medium-term plan and the proposed programme budget, taking into account the outcome of the Conference and should be considered during the thirty-second resumed session of CPC.

58. Mr. COHEN (United States of America) said that, while his delegation strongly supported the objectives of the Conference on Environment and Development, it did not agree that the Conference secretariat should have so many high-level posts. It was unusual for a special conference secretariat to be staffed by both an Under-Secretary-General and an Assistant Secretary-General; that should not recur in the future. Moreover, the secretariat had too many posts at the P-5, D-1 and D-2 levels and a large number of secretaries and clerical workers. It was difficult to understand why such a large support staff was needed when a substantial investment had been made in modern office equipment for the Conference secretariat. His delegation was also concerned that the Under-Secretary-General, Assistant Secretary-General and other staff members were to be retained for nearly six months after the end of the Conference. In particular, his delegation saw no need to retain those two high-level posts until December 1992.

59. While there had been a nominal reduction in respect of travel expenses, the travel budget for the Conference secretariat remained too high. The explanation given in paragraph 11 C.9 was not convincing. His delegation did not consider the period of six months leading up to the Conference to be a "limited period". Given the amount of travel allowed for in the current budget, it would seem unnecessary to allocate significant additional resources for travel in 1992.

60. Finally, the allocation of $100,700 for travel of United Nations officials to the Conference in Brazil appeared excessive. His delegation wished to know the number of people who would be attending the Conference and the justification for their participation. It would also appreciate an estimate of the number of conference-servicing and Department of Public Information staff who would be attending the Conference.

61. Mr. SENA CARDOSO (Brazil) said that Brazil's commitment to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development went beyond the national interest which it had as the host country, being based on an awareness of the need to promote sustainable and environmentally sound development in all

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countries. Consequently he attached great importance to the conclusions and recommendations of CPC concerning section 11C of the budget and in particular to the recommendation contained in paragraph 201 of the Committee's report (A/46/16). It was very important that the United Nations should be able to undertake follow-up activities to the Conference and that sufficient resources should be allocated to fund the Conference's preparatory process.

62. Mrs. Goicochea (Cuba), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

63. Mr. INOMATA (Japan), referring to the Trust Fund for Preparatory Activities for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, wished to know exactly how much was expected to be obtained from extrabudgetary sources. It would seem that since funding from the regular budget for the Conference was insufficient, innovative sources of extrabudgetary funds were being used. It was important to know how the indirect costs of the Conference were to be funded in order to gain a better understanding of the role of extrabudgetary resources in financing similar new activities corresponding to a priority sector of the work of the United Nations. He also wished to know the exact number of posts to be financed with extrabudgetary resources in that section of the budget.

64. Mr. IRUMBA (Uganda) recalled that he had asked previously whether the Conference secretariat would be chaired by an official at Under-Secretary-General level. In that respect, he wished to remind the Committee that the United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space had been chaired by an official of similar grade. The resources allocated would need to be revised in the light of the terms of reference agreed by the Conference. Although he had some reservations with regard to paragraph 11C.4 of the Advisory Committee's report, he did not disagree with the recommendation and he agreed with paragraph 197 of the CPC report concerning the allocation of credits.

65. Otherwise Uganda fully supported the Conference and concurred with the remarks of the Japanese delegation concerning the Trust Fund. It appeared that there were insufficient resources available to allow the developing countries to participate fully. For a delegation to be able to participate effectively at Rio de Janeiro it would need to be adequately represented, including at all the preparatory meetings. It was very important that the Secretariat should indicate whether the level of resources available was sufficient to guarantee such a level of participation.

66. Mr. RAE (India) strongly supported the conclusions and recommendations of paragraph 200 of the CPC report and the provisions relating to the continuation of posts referred to in paragraph 11C.6 of the proposed programme budget. He also expressed his overall support for the Advisory Committee's recommendations, including those contained in paragraph 11C.4 of its report.

67. Mr. MOSSNESET (Norway), speaking on behalf of the Nordic countries, said that the environment was one of the five main priorities of the medium-term plan for 1992 to 1997. The Nordic countries had always considered that issue to be one of great importance and had played an active role in the Conference's preparatory process . They had also been among the principal contributors to the Trust Fund and to the Voluntary Fund, since it was essential, in their opinion, that the Secretary-General should be provided with the necessary resources to discharge the Organization's mandate with regard to the environment. In that respect, the Nordic countries wished to draw attention to the extent to which the holding of the Conference was dependent on extrabudgetary resources. More than 75 per cent of the estimated total allocations of $14 million for that section of the budget would need to be financed from extrabudgetary resources. Bearing in mind that environmental issues were a priority concern, the imbalance in the composition of the funding for the Conference was disturbing.

68. It was assumed that the Secretary-General's proposals reflected the priorities established in the medium-term plan, but that was not the case as far as the section under consideration was concerned. The principle of zero growth in the budget of the United Nations, the lack of resources with which to finance new activities and the reluctance of Member States to finance the new functions of the United Nations was unfortunately leading to an increasing dependence on extrabudgetary resources. The Advisory Committee was recommending certain reductions in the amounts proposed by the Secretary-General. The Nordic countries did not agree with those reductions, but since they represented a comparatively small percentage of the total amount allocated to the section, they were prepared to approve the appropriations, whether or not the recommended reductions were agreed.

69. With regard to the reductions recommended in paragraph 11C.4 of the Advisory Committee's report, the Nordic countries did not consider a period of 10 months to be excessive and they did not agree that the appropriation should be halved. It was obvious that resources would be required once the Conference was over in order to finance follow-up activities.

70. Mr. BAUDOT (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division) said that the Secretariat's estimates of voluntary contributions to help finance the Conference were nearly correct, since contributions to the Trust Fund totalled approximately $5 million and voluntary contributions to defray the travel expenses of representatives of the developing countries amounted to almost $1.5 million. In the opinion of the Secretariat, that would be sufficient to ensure adequate representation of the developing countries at the preparatory meetings and at the Conference itself.

71. With regard to the anxieties expressed with regard to the posts funded by voluntary contributions, those posts did not figure in the proposed budget. The Conference secretariat would have to be asked for information concerning the exact number of posts to be funded by that means.

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72. The Secretariat shared the belief expressed by the Norwegian delegation concerning the importance of environment-related activities and that concern was reflected in the proposed programme budget, not just in the section concerned with the Conference itself but also in the section on the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and in various subprogrammes in other sections. Information in justification of the number of persons providing services at the Conference would be supplied to the Fifth Committee shortly.

73. The CHAIRMAN said that, if she heard no objection, she would take it that the Committee wished to approve the conclusions and recommendations in respect of section 11C, contained in paragraphs 200-202 of the report of the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC).

74. It was so decided.

75. The CHAIRMAN said that, if she heard no objection, she would take it that, based on the recommendation of the Advisory Committee, the Committee wished to approve in first reading an amount of $3,297,800 under section 11C of the proposed programme budget, on the understanding that the Committee would consider in informal consultations the issues raised in first reading and that the necessary adjustments would be made.

76. It was so decided.

Section 11D. Regional Commissions New York Office

77. Mr. COHEN (United States of America) said that the recommendation of the Group of 18 concerning the merging of the New York liaison offices continued to be valid and should be implemented. He was concerned that the Secretariat appeared to have no intention of studying further the possibility of merging the offices.

78. His delegation would be grateful for an explanation of why the staffing table in the Regional Commissions Liaison Office in New York was at such a high level, since there appeared to be no reason why all staff should be Professionals and at the P-4 or higher levels. He also wished to know why it was necessary to maintain three General Service posts.

79. Mr. BAUDOT (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division) said that the staffing table in the office in question was at a lower level than that of other liaison offices in New York. The relationship between the regional commissions and New York was very important, since it was not just a matter of representation but also of making a contribution to the work of the commissions. The Secretariat believed that the resources requested under that subsection were minimal. In any event, the general question of liaison offices would be taken up later in the debate.

80. The CHAIRMAN said that, if she heard no objection, she would take it that the Committee wished to approve the conclusions and recommendations in respect of subsection 11D, which were contained in paragraph 207 of the CPC report.

81. It was so decided.

82. The CHAIRMAN said that, if she heard no objection, she would take it that, based on the recommendations of the Advisory Committee, the Committee wished to approve in first reading an amount of $982,600 under section 11B, on the understanding that the Committee would consider in informal consultations the issues raised in first reading and that the necessary adjustments would be made.

83. It was so decided.

Section 12. Regular programme of technical cooperation

84. Mr. BAUDOT (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division) said that the resources proposed under section 12 were at maintenance level, in view of the difficulties that had arisen in the past in the area of technical cooperation activities, which concerned a large number of programmes in the medium-term plan and in the implementation of which several departments participated, including the Department of Technical Cooperation for Development. The number of posts required and their distribution was indicative and could change during implementation of the programmes.

85. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the report of the Advisory Committee on section 12, said that traditionally, the provision for that section was established by the General Assembly as a lump sum to cover the costs of the regular programme of technical cooperation, and was revised solely to take account of the effects of currency and inflation. The Advisory Committee had not recommended that the general recommendations in chapter I of its report should be applied to section 12 as that might have been interpreted as an attempt to reduce the figure established by the General Assembly. The resources made available also depended on what services were requested by Member States. In 1990, approximately $19.8 million had been disbursed under section 12.

86. Ms. BERENGUER (Chairman of the Committee for Programme and Coordination) said that CPC had recommended that programme activities concerning the environment should be budgeted separately within the sectoral advisory services component, and had also taken note that section 12 had not been presented in programme form.

87. Mr. COHEN (United States of America) said that technical cooperation activities should not be financed from the regular budget. While his delegation did not oppose the approval of that section of the budget, that did not mean that its position of principle had changed. According to

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paragraph 12.2 of section 12, the regular programme of technical cooperation should be used for innovative and catalytic activities and funding should go to activities with a demonstrated multiplier effect likely to have a significant impact on the development process. He wished to request that the Secretariat should provide examples of such activities within the regular budget. He also wished to know how the Secretariat assessed the programme activities under the section. Even though the performance report on the programme budget might include a quantitative estimate of the outputs under the section, it did not provide a qualitative assessment of activities.

88. He took it that the 85 regional advisers posts, of which a breakdown had been provided in tables 12.5 and 12.7 of the proposed budget, were not reflected in the staffing table for the regular budget. He wished to know the grade of each post, whether the regional advisers were provided with support staff and, if so, how many. He also wished to know why there was no breakdown by object of expenditure for that section and would welcome, if possible, information on the resources allocated to salaries and common staff costs, as well as an estimate of travel and related expenditures.

89. Mr. INOMATA (Japan) noted that the number of interregional advisers for the 1992-1993 biennium in table 12.5 was the same as in 1990-1991 and wondered what difference there was between the two bienniums.

90. The CHAIRMAN said that, if she heard no objection, she would take it that the Committee wished to approve the conclusions and recommendations contained in paragraphs 216 and 217 of the CPC report.

91. It was so decided.

92. The CHAIRMAN said that, if she heard no objection, she would take it that, based on the recommendations of the Secretary-General, the Committee wished to approve in first reading an amount of $42,851,800 under section 12 of the programme budget, on the understanding that the Committee would consider in informal consultations the issues raised in first reading and that the necessary adjustments would be made.

93. It was so decided.

94. Mr. KINCHEN (United Kingdom) said that, while his country supported technical cooperation activities in the United Nations system, it did not agree with the way in which they were financed. The fact that his delegation had joined the consensus to adopt that section of the budget did not mean that there had been any change in its position on the matter.

Section 13. Department of International Economic and Social Affairs

95. Mr. BAUDOT (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division) said that a note would be distributed concerning the International Conference on Population and Development which would confirm the amount of the appropriation requested by the Secretary-General for non-recurrent expenditure (approximately $1.5 million, to be charged to the regular budget) and would also specify the amount of extrabudgetary resources already received (between $200,000 and $300,000). Around $300,000 in voluntary contributions were also expected. Two voluntary contribution funds had been established, one for support costs for substantive activities and the other to finance the participation of developing countries at the Conference. He wished to note that the Advisory Committee had recommended a provisional reduction of $1.5 million, pending further information on available funds, and had indicated that, since that was a provisional reduction, restitution of the sum would not involve the use of the contingency fund.

96. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the report of the Advisory Committee on section 13, said that representatives of the Secretary-General had indicated that $925,900 would be allocated under the regular budget for activities relating to the International Conference on Population and Development.

97. After referring to the recommendations contained in paragraphs 13.6, 13.7 and 13.8 of the Advisory Committee's report (A/46/7), he emphasized, in connection with the provisional reduction of $1.5 million recommended by the Committee, that the restoration of all or part of that amount on the basis of the report mentioned by the Director of the Programme Planning and Budget Division should not involve recourse to the contingency fund.

98. Ms. BERENGUER (Chairman of the Committee for Programme and Coordination) said that the Committee recommended that the descriptions of the programmes in section 13 should be approved, subject to the changes mentioned in paragraphs 229 and 230 of the Committee's report.

99. Mr. COHEN (United States of America) stressed the need to streamline and rationalize the activities and structure of the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs, whose work was of undoubted importance. Possible initiatives which could be adopted to restructure the Secretariat as a whole should include a reassessment of the current division of labour between the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs, the Department of Technical Cooperation for Development, the Centre for Science and Technology for Development, UNCTAD, the Centre for Transnational Corporations, the Director-General's Office and the regional commissions. There were serious problems of duplication and fragmentation which prevented the United Nations from exercising a truly meaningful role in economic development.

100. Subprogramme 2 of the programme "Global development issues and policies" included the publication of the 1993 edition of the report The World Social Situation. The report, whose preparation had required excessive staff levels,

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did not seem to be a useful tool for decision-making and so it should be eliminated. That would liberate resources which could be used to strengthen more substantive social programmes in Vienna.

101. The Advisory Committee had pointed out in paragraph 13.7 of its report that it was unable to identify in the budget submission for section 13 the total resource requirements for activities relating to Project LINK. It would be useful if the Secretariat could explain why that information was missing from the budget and provide an estimate of the cost of the Project for 1992-1993, as well as an estimate of the resources provided since the approval of the Project.

102. It appeared that some publications of the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs had some commercial value, in particular the International Tax Agreement Series, and it might be useful to have information on the end uses of the publication and the steps taken to promote its sale. Too many of the Department's publications were distributed free of charge.

103. There should also be a review, as the Advisory Committee had recommended in paragraph 13.8 of its report, of the programme of work with regard to publications of the Department since there did not appear to be "rationale either for the frequency of any given publication or for its recurrence or discontinuance". The Fifth Committee should explicitly request that a study of the publications programme of DIESA should be made available to the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session.

104. That section of the budget included substantial budget requests for preparatory activities of the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development. It would be useful if most, if not all, of those activities were financed from voluntary contributions. Furthermore, the Secretariat should provide information regarding pledges which had been received in support of the Conference and its preparatory activities. The projected costs for preparatory activities were very high and it would be appropriate to compare them, for example, to budgeted expenses for the 1995 World Conference on Women.

105. His delegation believed that the activities of the population programme should be funded and managed exclusively by the United Nations Population Fund.

106. Programme 4, Statistics, included a technical publication under Activity 3 (b) entitled "Classification of the Branches of the National Economy of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA)". In view of the demise of that organization, his delegation would like to know the reasons for preparing that study. In addition, it noted that DIESA continued to recruit staff for the Centrally-Planned Economies Section of the International Economic Relations Branch. His delegation would like to know whether the changes which had taken place in the world over the past few years had in any

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way affected the staffing level and programme of work of that unit, and requested information on its projected staffing level for the biennium 1992-1993.

107. Two years earlier, his delegation had questioned the need to maintain a separate programme support section in DIESA, but unfortunately, it had received no response from the Secretariat. While his delegation was pleased to note the redeployment of one post from that unit to a substantive programme, it continued to have serious reservations about the staffing level for administration of that Department. In the view of his delegation, some services should be provided by the central administrative support units of the Secretariat. Other functions could be assumed by substantive units of DIESA. Since almost half the Department's resources were provided from extrabudgetary resources, his delegation would like to know why all the programme support staff had been charged to the regular budget. That appeared to be another example of the regular budget subsidizing voluntary programmes. That situation should be carefully reviewed by the Secretariat and ACABQ.

108. Mr. STEEGHS (Netherlands), speaking on behalf of the Twelve States members of the European Community, said that there was overall lack of coherence and uniformity among the various sections of the budget: some were extremely detailed and comprehensive, while others stood out because of their lack of information. Member States would be better prepared to examine the budget if there were standardized criteria for drafting section narratives. Standardization would also facilitate comparison among different sections and within a single section.

109. The Twelve had noted with concern that important activities of the Non-governmental Organizations Unit had hardly been mentioned. The items which had appeared in the 1989-1990 programme budget for that Unit and were not found in the proposed budget for 1992-1993 should be restored.

110. In order to thoroughly consider resource needs of any unit or section, the narrative must reflect precisely the level and type of its activities. That must be taken into account when drafting those and other sections in the future.

111. Finally, the Twelve would like to hear from the representative of the Secretary-General and the Chairman of ACABQ what could be expected with respect to the funding of the International Conference on Population and Development.

112. Mr. IRUMBA (Uganda) fully supported the recommendations in paragraph 229 of the CPC report (A/46/16). It had been suggested that some activities could be reduced or eliminated so that the resources could be redistributed and transferred to Vienna. His delegation had always favoured a comprehensive reform of the Economic and Social Council, rather than partial reforms which strengthened only certain units.

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113. With respect to publications, his delegation agreed with the recommendation in paragraph 13.8 of the Advisory Committee's report (A/46/7) that it would be appropriate to review the periodicity of publications. His delegation disagreed with the representative of the United States of America, since it considered those publications extremely useful, and reaffirmed its support for the corresponding programme.

114. Finally, he agreed with the recommendation of CPC regarding the need for close collaboration with the Economic Commission for Africa on the preparation of the system-wide plan of action for African economic recovery.

115. Ms. ERKISSON FOGH (Sweden), speaking on behalf of the five Nordic countries, said that they, too were concerned to see that the Non-governmental Organizations Unit and its activities, which had grown considerably over the years, were not properly described in section 13 of the proposed programme budget. Activities relating to non-governmental organizations were also to be found in section 4, Political and General Assembly Affairs and Secretariat Services, and in section 31, Public Information. The Nordic countries found some discrepancies in the narratives of various sections, which did not facilitate comparison. In order to justify the resource requirements of Secretariat units, the activities of those units must be clearly described. The Nordic countries recommended that the biennium 1992-1993 should use the same narrative for the Non-governmental Organizations Unit as had been used in the programme budget for 1990-1991.

116. Mr. VALEV (Bulgaria) said that his delegation also believed that the Non-governmental Organizations Unit and its activities had not been appropriately reflected in the narrative in section 13 of the proposed programme budget for 1992-1993, and he supported the suggestion of the States members of the European Community and the Nordic countries that the proposed programme budget for 1992-1993 should use the narrative from the 1990-1991 programme budget.

117. The CHAIRMAN said that, if she heard no objection, she would take it that the Committee wished to adopt the conclusions and recommendations contained in paragraphs 229 to 231 of the CPC report (A/46/16).

118. It was so decided.

119. The CHAIRMAN said, if she heard no objection, she would take it that, based on the recommendation of the Advisory Committee, the Committee wished to approve in first reading an amount of $54,108,200 under section 13 of the proposed programme budget, on the understanding that the issues raised in first reading would be addressed in informal consultations and the necessary adjustments would be made.

120. It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 6.10 p.m.